

# STARK CONDEMNS IRS INVESTIGATION OF THE NAACP'S TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

Thursday, 28 October 2004

Timing is clearly designed to intimidate NAACP election activity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 29, 2004

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## STARK CONDEMNS IRS INVESTIGATION OF THE NAACP'S TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

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FREMONT,  
CA — Today, Rep. Pete Stark (D-Fremont) wrote to the IRS Commissioner demanding the repudiation of recent actions taken by the IRS to initiate an investigation into the NAACP's tax-exempt status.

“The IRS decision to investigate the NAACP's tax-exempt status just before the election is overtly political and should be rescinded,” stated Rep. Stark. “The timing of this attack is clearly designed to intimidate the organization from pursuing its active voter registration and outreach campaign. It is yet another example of the extreme efforts Republican activists - including those within our government -- are taking to attempt to suppress the number of African American voters this year.”

Rep. Stark was joined in his letter by Rep. Charles B. Rangel, Ranking Democrat on the Committee on Ways and Means and Rep. John Conyers, Ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Judiciary.

The full text of the letter follows:

October 29, 2004

The Honorable Mark W. Everson  
Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service  
Department of the Treasury

1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 3000

Washington, DC 20224-0002

Dear Commissioner Everson:

We are writing to express our outrage that, less than a week before the Presidential election, the Internal Revenue Service has acted to start an investigation of the NAACP. As the Ranking and Senior Members of the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Ranking Member of the Committee on the Judiciary, we request an immediate written report on the matter.

First, it is obvious that the timing of this IRS examination is nothing more than an effort to intimidate members of the NAACP, and the communities the organization represents, in their get-out-the vote effort nationwide. Apparently, the few facts that the IRS uses to justify its attack on the NAACP show that the organization was well within the bounds of legal speech by a tax-exempt organization. It is not against the tax law for the NAACP, or any tax exempt organization, to discuss or oppose various aspects of the Bush Administration's policies. We demand to know why the current Administration, through the IRS, is attacking the NAACP..

Second, the timing of the IRS's action to investigate the IRS is extremely suspect. The speech took place over three months ago, shortly after President Bush's refusal to meet with the organization at its annual convention. The NAACP had hoped for the traditional participation of the President and his refusal caused great concern to the organization. Given these facts, we demand to know who (inside or outside of the government) requested that the IRS initiate an examination of the NAACP, for the purpose of challenging its tax-exempt status, and when this decision was made.

Finally, to allow the IRS to threaten the most respected civil rights organization in the United States with revocation of tax-exempt status has political implications that far exceed the merits of any possible technical tax case against the NAACP. The chilling effect of the IRS's attack on the NAACP will be felt by the tax-exempt community at large and cannot go unchallenged. We demand that you publicly, specifically and immediately repudiate the recent actions of the IRS taken against the NAACP.

Sincerely,

Fortney Pete Stark

Ranking Democrat

Subcommittee on Health

Committee on Ways and Means

John Conyers, Jr.

Ranking Democrat

Committee on the Judiciary

Charles B. Rangel

Ranking Democrat

Committee on Ways and Means